

REMARKS

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 15-20 are pending in this application. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 15-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,612,267 to West. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The present application is a divisional application of 10/175,889 which was filed June 21, 2002. This application has a priority date of June 21, 2002. The West application has a U.S. filing date of August 20, 2002. Because the present application has an earlier priority date than the U.S. filing date of the West patent, it is not proper prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a). Applicant respectfully requests that the West reference be removed as a prior art reference. Because no other references were cited as a basis for a rejection against claims 15-20, Applicant respectfully requests that claims 15-20 be allowed.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of the application are believed in order, and such action is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite issuance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to telephone the undersigned attorney at 202/861-1792.

Respectfully submitted,

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